When a recon leader receives a zone recon mission, the order will define the zone by lateral boundaries, an LD, and an LOA or objective. The parent unit may include additional PLs or other graphic control measures within the zone to help control the maneuver of the units.

The recon leader analyzes the mission to determine what must be accomplished. He analyzes any information about the enemy during the IPB to determine what enemy activity he should expect to encounter. The engineer commander should work with the recon leader, the S2, and the S3 to ensure that engineer recon tasks are identified and that enough engineers are attached to the recon element to accomplish the mission. The engineer commander will help analyze the terrain by—

- Assisting the S2 in map recon.

- Examining aerial photographs.

- Using an automated terrain-visualization tool.

Depending on the type of recon element, the experience of the attached engineer recon team, and METT-T considerations, the element can conduct the zone recon using a two-, three-, or four-team organization. The recon element must deploy to cover the entire zone. It usually operates in a zone it knows very little about, so the COA must allow for flexibility, responsiveness, and security as it moves. The recon leader deploys the scout teams on line across the LD. He uses PLs, checkpoints, contact points, or TIRS points to ensure that the element recons the entire zone and that teams maintain contact with each other. He ensures that scout teams remain generally on line, which prevents significant gaps that a moving enemy could exploit. Scouts and engineers dismount as necessary to gather detailed information, clear danger areas, or move through areas that are not accessible to the vehicles. The element continues to recon the zone until it reaches the LOA or the final recon objective.

EXAMPLE OF A ZONE RECON

The following example of a zone recon is for a battalion scout platoon augmented with an engineer recon team.

Although strict formations are not generally used by scout platoons forward of the forward edge of the battle area (FEBA), the platoon leader in this example starts out with his platoon on line. He will attempt to generally maintain this relationship even though the teams are not mutually supporting much of the time. The platoon should deploy into formation before crossing the LD. In this example, Team A is on the left, Team B is on the right, and Team C is in the center of the zone (see Figure 3-12).

The platoon crosses the LD at the time prescribed in the commander's OPORD, using the bounding-overwatch technique of movement within the teams. In this mission, the platoon leader has chosen to position himself and the engineers with Team A because of the importance of the route and bridge in Team A's AO. The teams maneuver through the zone in a zigzag pattern to ensure that the zone is properly reconned and to accomplish all critical tasks of a zone recon. Security is provided within teams because the zone's width and terrain prevent the teams from providing mutual support (see Figure 3-13, page 3-24).
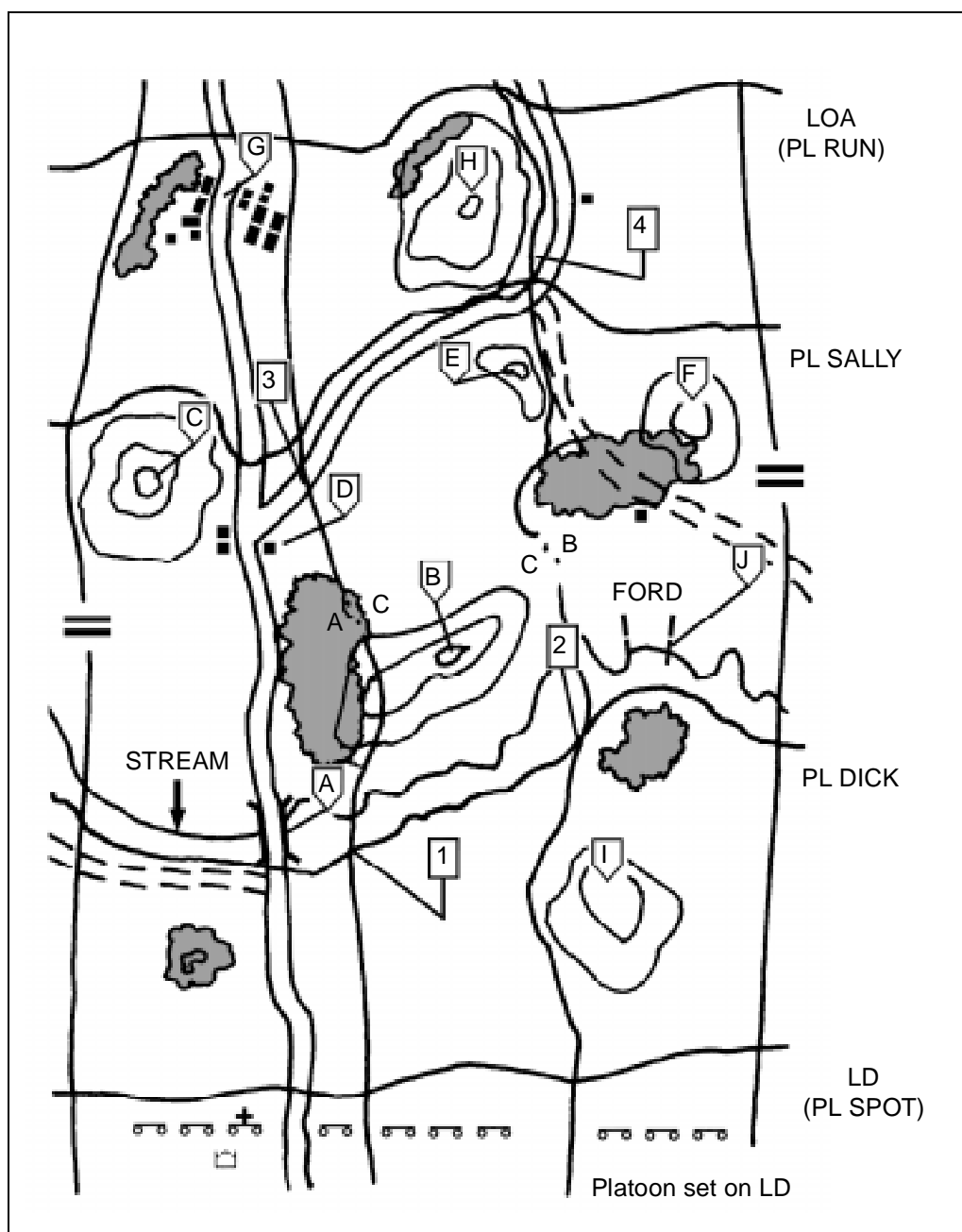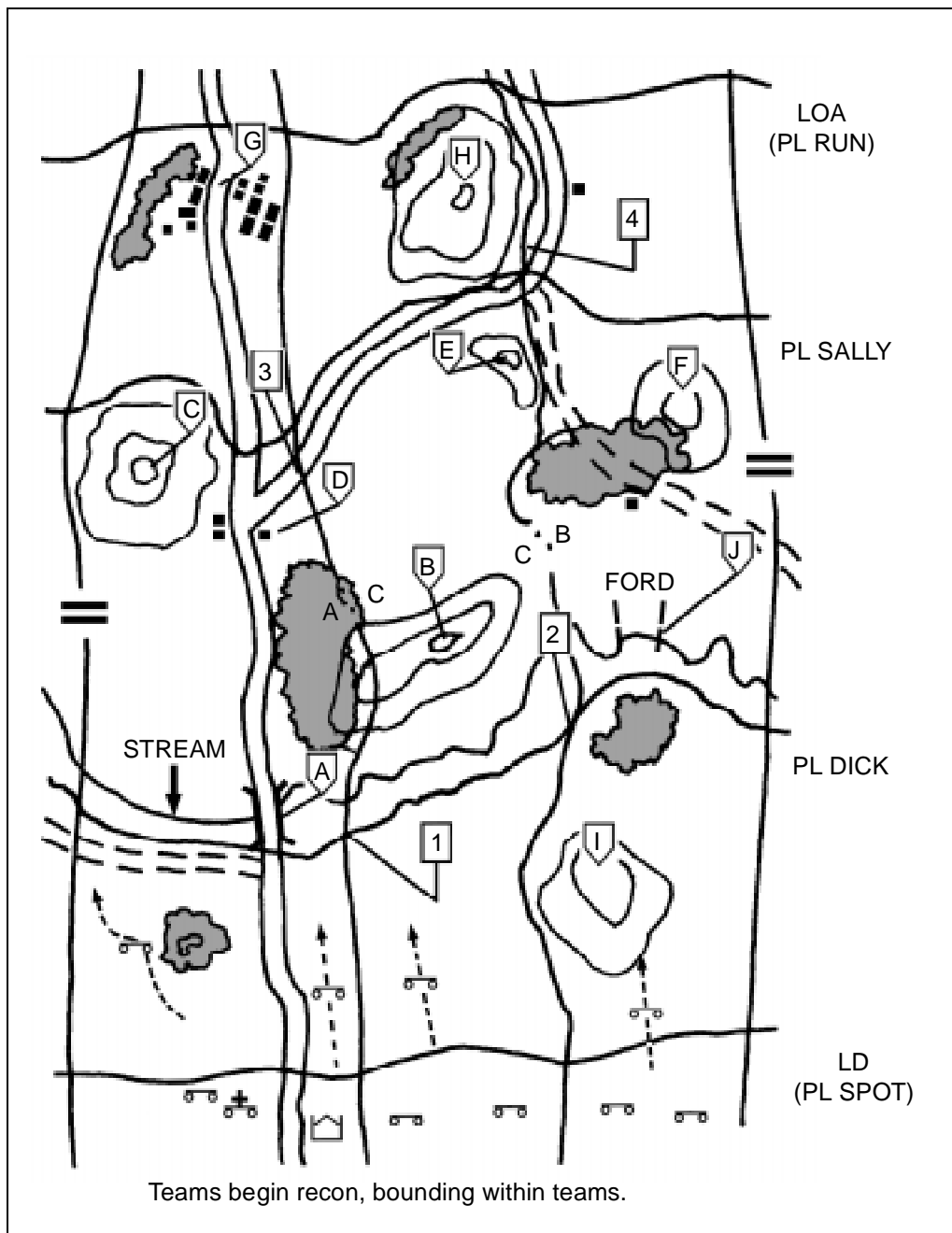
Figure 3-12. Scouts and engineers cross the LD

Figure 3-13. Zone recon

Depending on METT-T factors, the platoon leader chooses the movement technique best suited for C^2. He may choose to have the teams clear and set at all checkpoints, or he may have them bound through the checkpoints, report clear, and then set at the PLs. If the platoon leader has not assigned teams a particular checkpoint to orient on, the team leaders must plan their own measures to control the movement. They move team elements to contact points to ensure that the move is tied in with that of the other teams. The platoon leader does not allow any element to cross PL Dick until all elements have reported set (see Figure 3-14, page 3-26).

When the platoon is set on PL Dick, the leader gives the teams permission to execute PL Dick and move to PL Sally. The teams immediately begin reconning the stream to their front. Team A and the engineer recon team must execute a bridge recon and recon the stream for possible unmarked fords. They must conduct a ford recon at the known ford in zone.
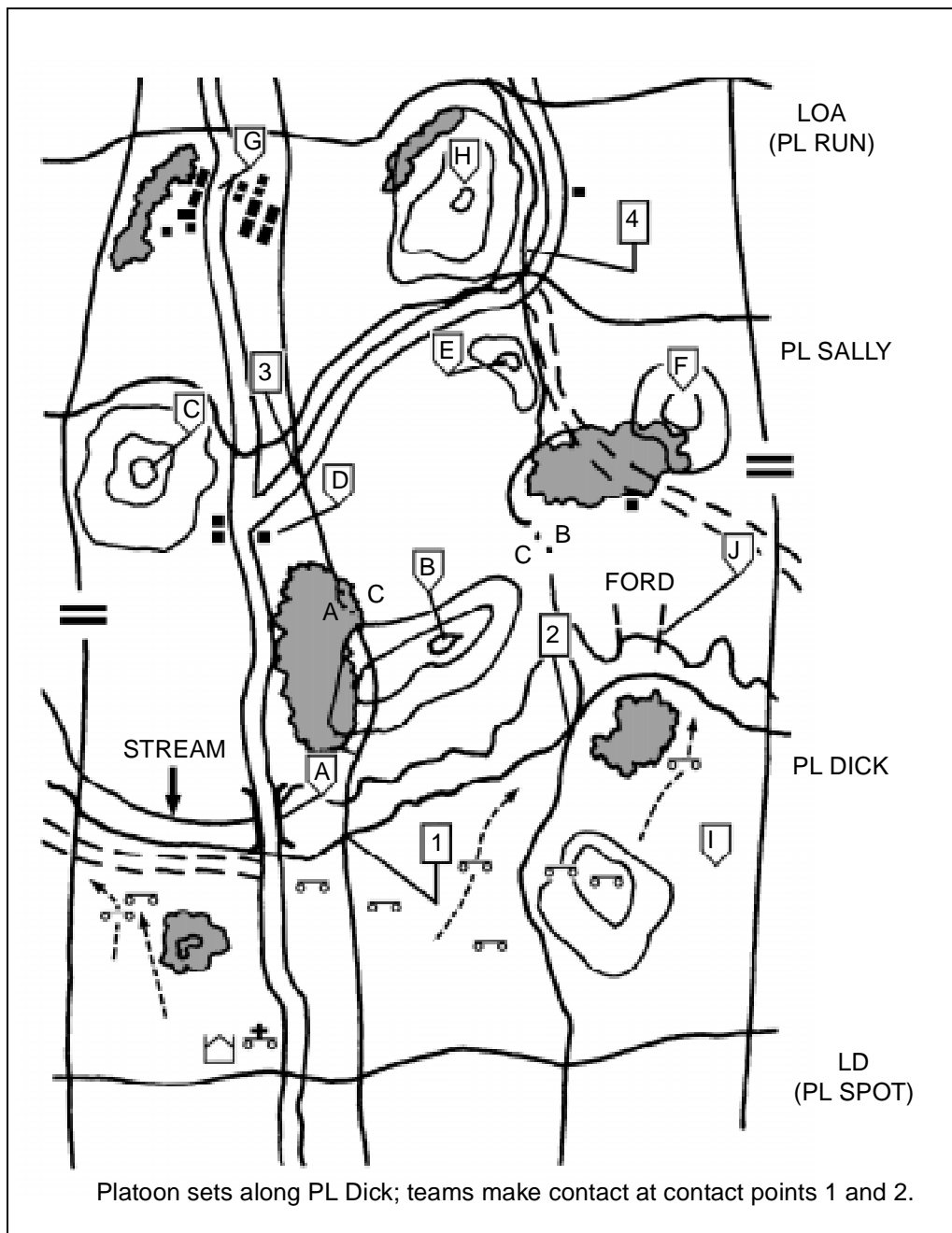
Once Team C completes its recon of the stream and reports negative results, it moves to the vicinity of contact point 2 and awaits permission to cross the stream at Team B's ford. Team C is also prepared to cross at Team A's bridge, if necessary (see Figure 3-15, page 3-27).

As Team A (with an engineer recon team) and Team B complete their recon tasks at the bridge and ford, they revert to the bounding-overwatch movement technique and continue to recon. Team C moves across the team boundary and prepares to cross the stream at the ford (see Figure 3-16, page 3-28).

The zone recon continues with Teams A and B clearing checkpoints D and F, respectively. The platoon leader holds the teams at those control measures to allow time for Team C to clear checkpoint B and get on line with the other teams at checkpoint E. This prevents dangerous gaps from developing between the teams (see Figure 3-17, page 3-29).

Once Team C sets at checkpoint E, the platoon leader has all elements on line and set along PL Sally. Teams A and C ensure that they make contact at contact point 3. The platoon leader gives permission for all elements to execute PL Sally and move to and set at PL Run (see Figure 3-18, page 3-30).

As the teams move across PL Sally, Teams B and C make contact at contact point 4. The platoon uses the bounding-overwatch technique within each team. The teams continue the zone recon in this manner, accomplishing all critical tasks and reporting all control measures and other recon information, until they reach the LOA or recon objective (see Figure 3-19, page 3-31).
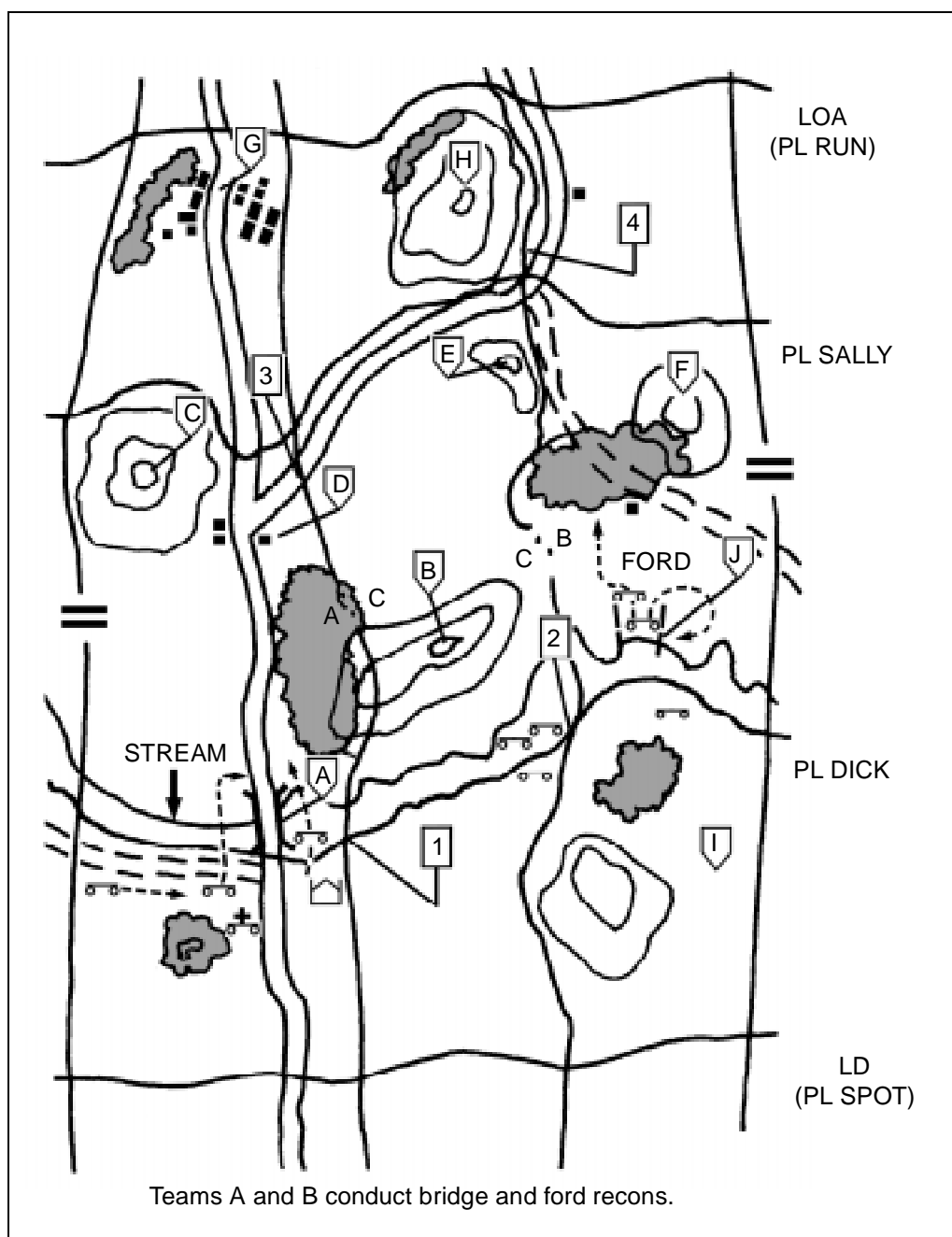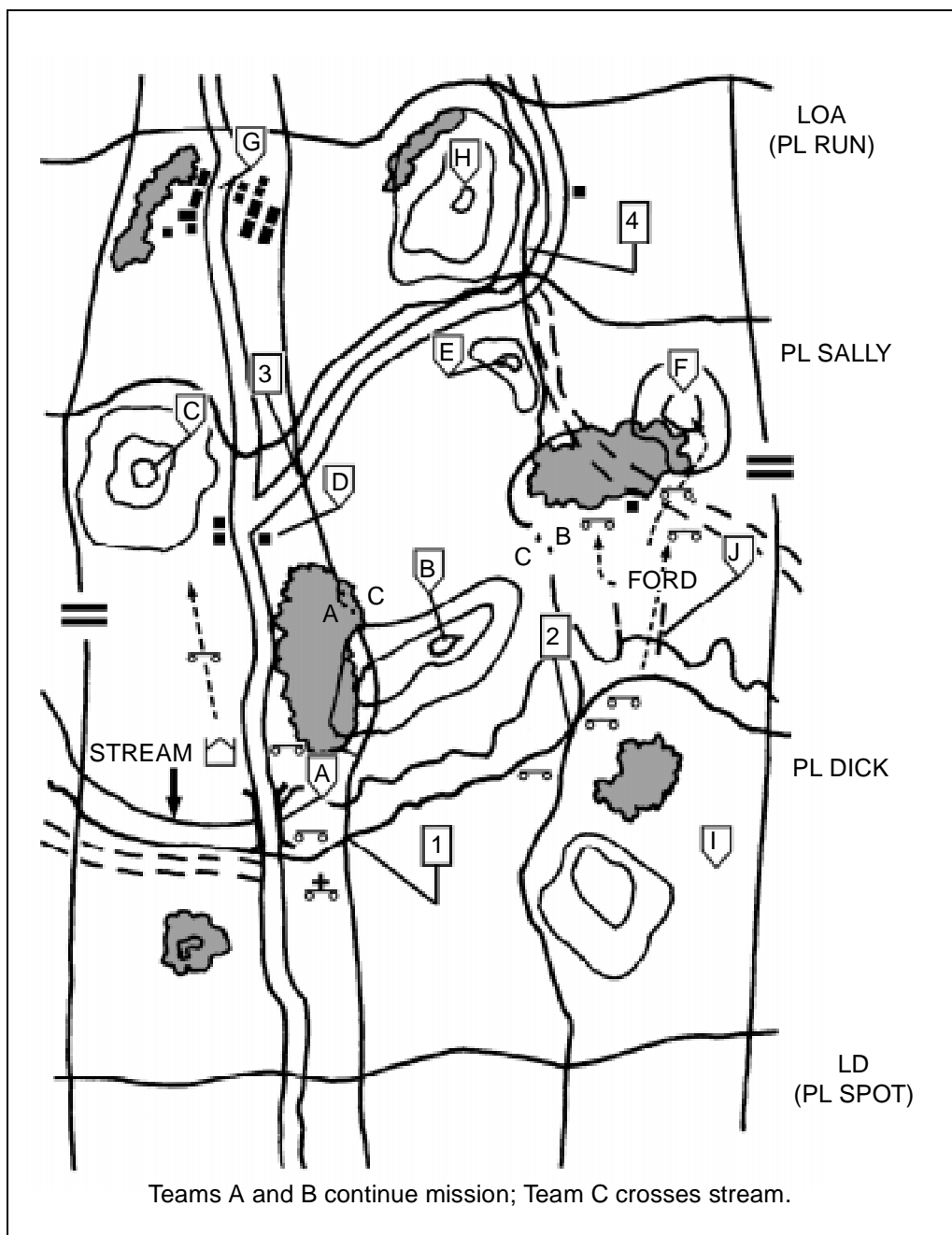
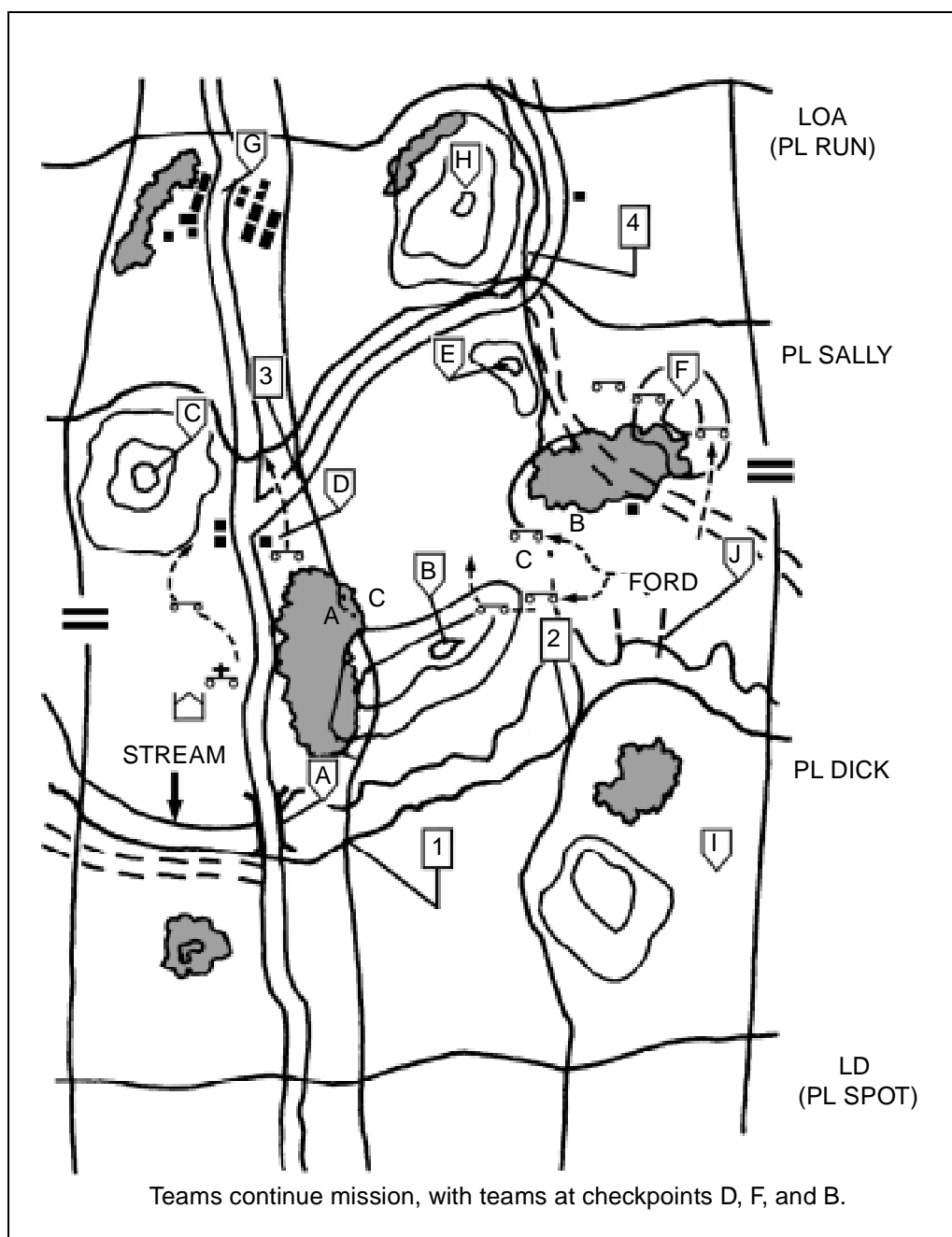**Figure 3-14. Teams set at PL Dick**

LOA
(PL RUN)

PL SALLY

FORD

PL DICK

STREAM

LD
(PL SPOT)

Teams A and B conduct bridge and ford recons.

Figure 3-15. Team C completes recon

LOA
(PL RUN)

PL SALLY

PL DICK

STREAM

FORD

LD
(PL SPOT)

Teams A and B continue mission; Team C crosses stream.

Figure 3-16. Teams A and B complete recon

Teams continue mission, with teams at checkpoints D, F, and B.

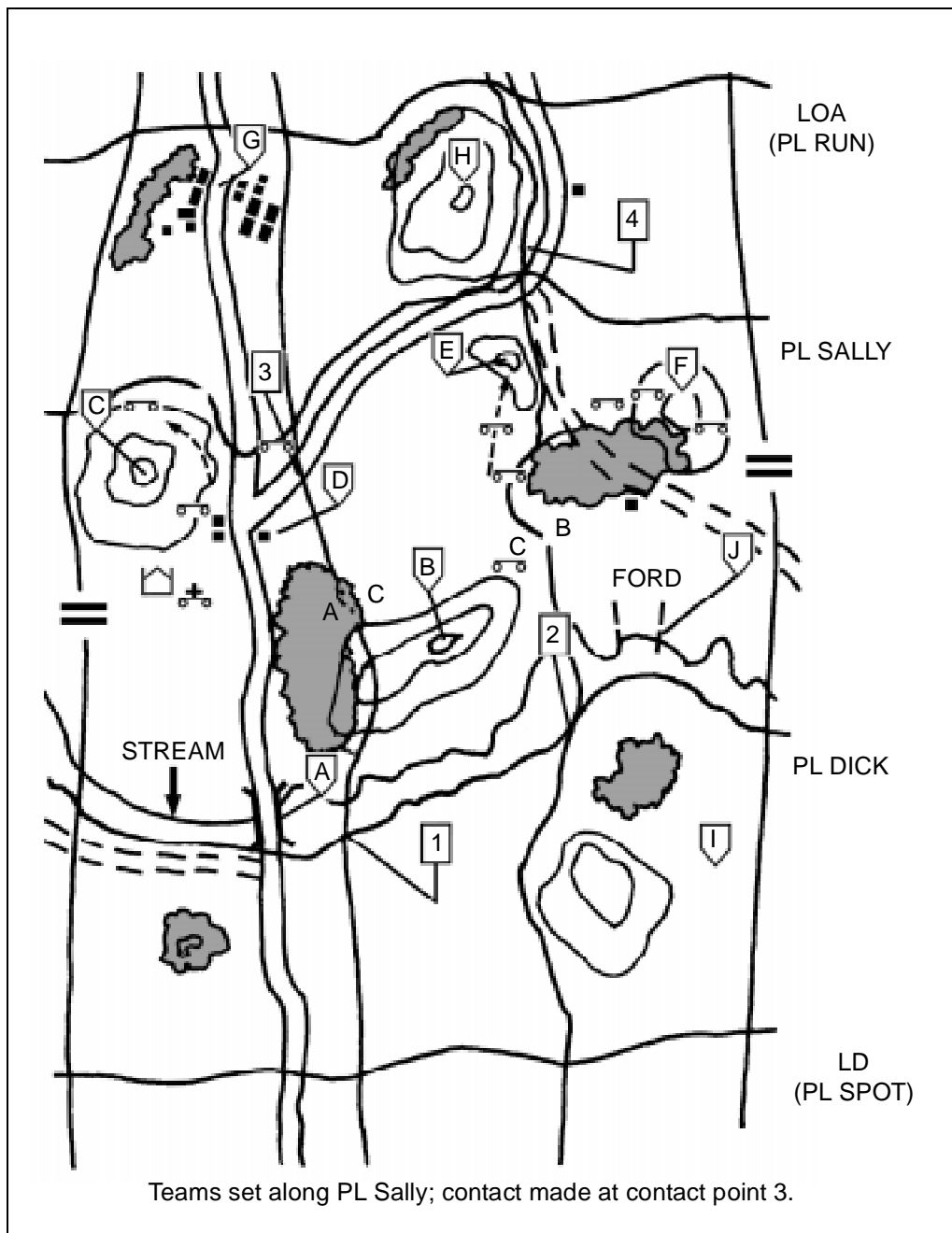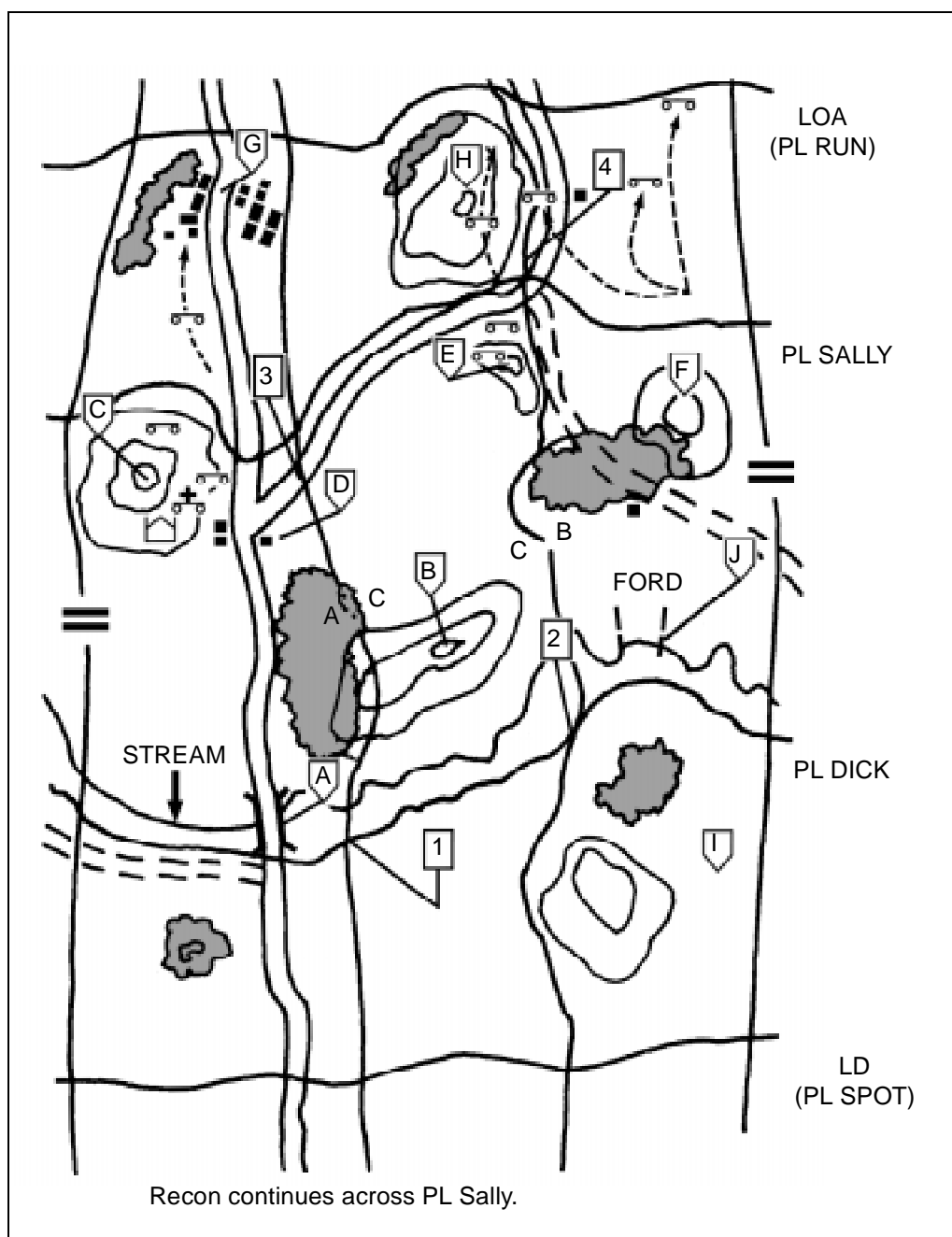**Figure 3-17. Teams A and B are halted**

Figure 3-18. Begin movement to PL Run

Figure 3-19. Zone recon complete

AREA RECON

Before moving forces into or near a specified area, commanders may call on their scouts or other recon element to conduct an area recon to avoid being surprised by unsuitable terrain conditions or unexpected enemy forces. The area could be a town, a ridgeline, woods, or other features that friendly forces intend to occupy or pass through. Area recon is frequently required for objective areas to confirm the IPB templates and provide detailed information regarding enemy dispositions. In addition, area recon within a zone of operation can be used to focus the scouts on the specific area that is critical to the commander. This technique of focusing the recon also permits the recon to be accomplished more quickly. Therefore, an area recon can be a stand-alone mission or a task to a team or platoon within the larger context of a platoon or troop recon mission.

CRITICAL TASKS

During an area recon, a recon element must accomplish a specified number of tasks unless directed to do otherwise. The recon leader must clearly understand which of the following critical tasks must be accomplished:

- Reconning all terrain within the area.

- Inspecting and classifying all bridges within the area.

- Locating suitable fording or crossing sites near all bridges within the area.

- Inspecting and classifying all overpasses, underpasses, and culverts.

- Locating obstacles in the area.

- Locating bypasses around built-up areas, obstacles, and contaminated areas.

- Finding and reporting all enemy forces within the area. (Cavalry units may be required to clear the area of obstacles. See FM 17-95.)

TECHNIQUES

The order to conduct an area recon mission identifies the area to be reconned within a continuous boundary. A recon leader completes his troop-leading procedures using METT-T. He also plans the movement to and, if necessary, from the area, following the basic rule of using different routes in and out of the area. The routes are specified for the recon element when it works as part of a larger unit such as a cavalry troop. The element's primary concern during movement to the area is security rather than recon. During movement to the area, it may be appropriate (depending on the commander's intent) for the recon element to avoid contact.

The recon leader encloses the given area within a zone; he uses boundaries, an LD, and an LOA. The recon leader can divide the area further by placing boundaries on identifiable terrain. This ensures that each team is responsible for specific terrain areas. The recon leader may also choose to orient and focus teams on checkpoints for both movement and recon. PLs may also be used to help control movement to the area. The recon leader places contact points at the intersections of PLs and boundaries and any other places he wants

physical contact and coordination between his teams. He uses TIRs as necessary. He works with the FSO to plan indirect fires to support the element's scheme of maneuver.

The recon leader deploys his teams abreast across the LD to accomplish their recon tasks. Formations are often not appropriate to this mission because of the irregular shape of the area and the wide variety of METT-T considerations.

EXAMPLE OF AN AREA RECON

The following example of an area recon is for a battalion scout platoon augmented by an engineer recon team.

The battalion scout platoon has been given the mission of performing an area recon of Objectives Lead and Iron. The platoon has not been assigned a specific route, and enemy dispositions are vague.

The platoon leader analyzes the terrain and his mission requirements and decides to use a four-team organization. He assigns Teams A, B, and C checkpoints on Objective Iron. Because of Objective Lead's smaller size, he assigns only Team D to recon it. The platoon leader decides that he and the engineer recon team will move with Team C to provide close control of the recon of Objective Iron. The platoon sergeant (PSG) will move with Team D and observe the recon of Objective Lead. The platoon leader decides to move the platoon using checkpoints that make maximum use of cover and concealment between the LD and the objectives (see Figure 3-20, page 3-34).

Using the four-team organization, the platoon crosses PL Bob at the time specified in the commander's OPORD. The platoon crosses in sequence, with the two lead teams executing and the following teams waiting until initial checkpoints are cleared before proceeding. No platoon formation is used. The lead teams, which have the longest distance to move to their recon objectives, use the bounding-overwatch technique to ensure maximum security (see Figure 3-21, page 3-35).

As the lead teams execute checkpoints C and H, the trail teams cross the LD. The movement technique is bounding overwatch within teams (see Figure 3-22, page 3-36).

The scout teams continue their move to the designated dismount points. Team D occupies its dismount point, checkpoint L. The team sets its vehicles in hide positions, organizes a patrol, and deploys local security (see Figure 3-23, page 3-37).

Team D's patrol moves on covered and concealed dismounted routes to Objective Lead and conducts a dismounted recon. The patrol uses the fan dismounted recon technique to thoroughly recon the objective. Teams A and B occupy their dismount points (checkpoints A and D, respectively). Team C continues to move (see Figure 3-24, page 3-38).

Team D's patrol completes its recon of Objective Lead. The team submits its report and establishes an OP in the vicinity of checkpoint J from which it can observe the objective area. Teams A and B dispatch their patrols to conduct dismounted recon on Objective Iron. The platoon leader has designated the checkpoints on the objective to focus the team's patrol. Teams A and B recon checkpoints G and F, respectively. Team C occupies its dismount point in the vicinity of checkpoint K (see Figure 3-25, page 3-39).
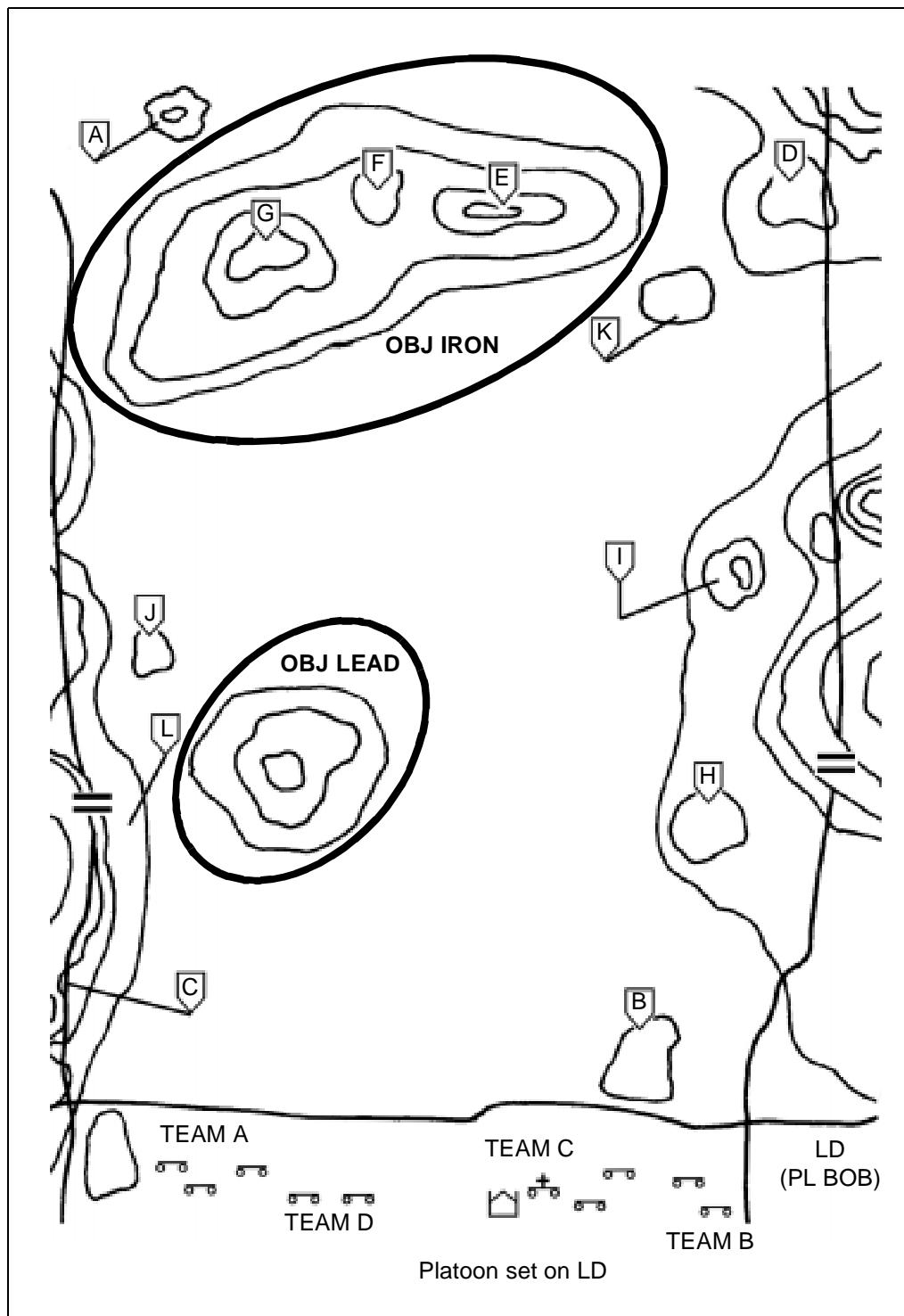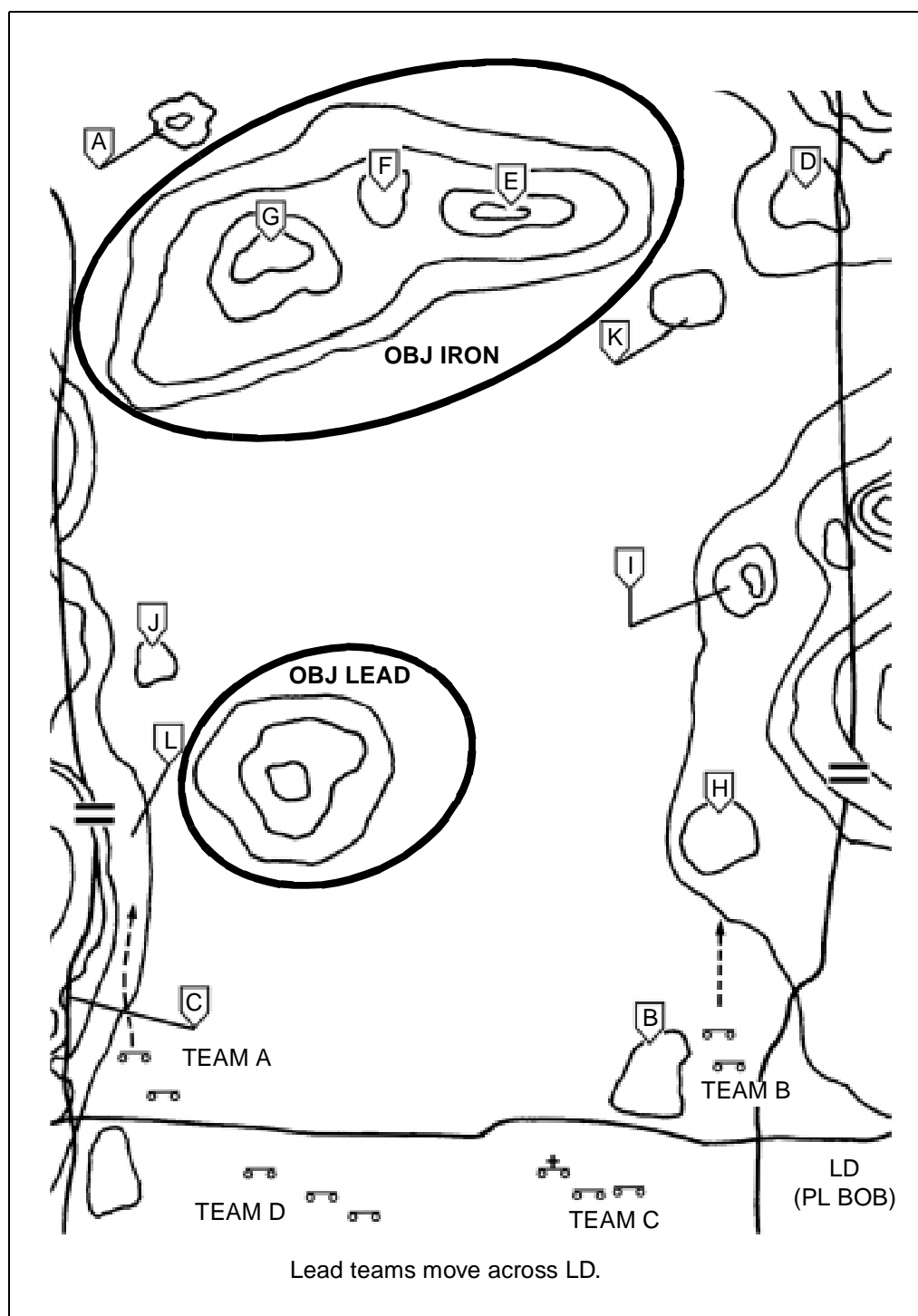
Figure 3-20. Area recon

Lead teams move across LD.

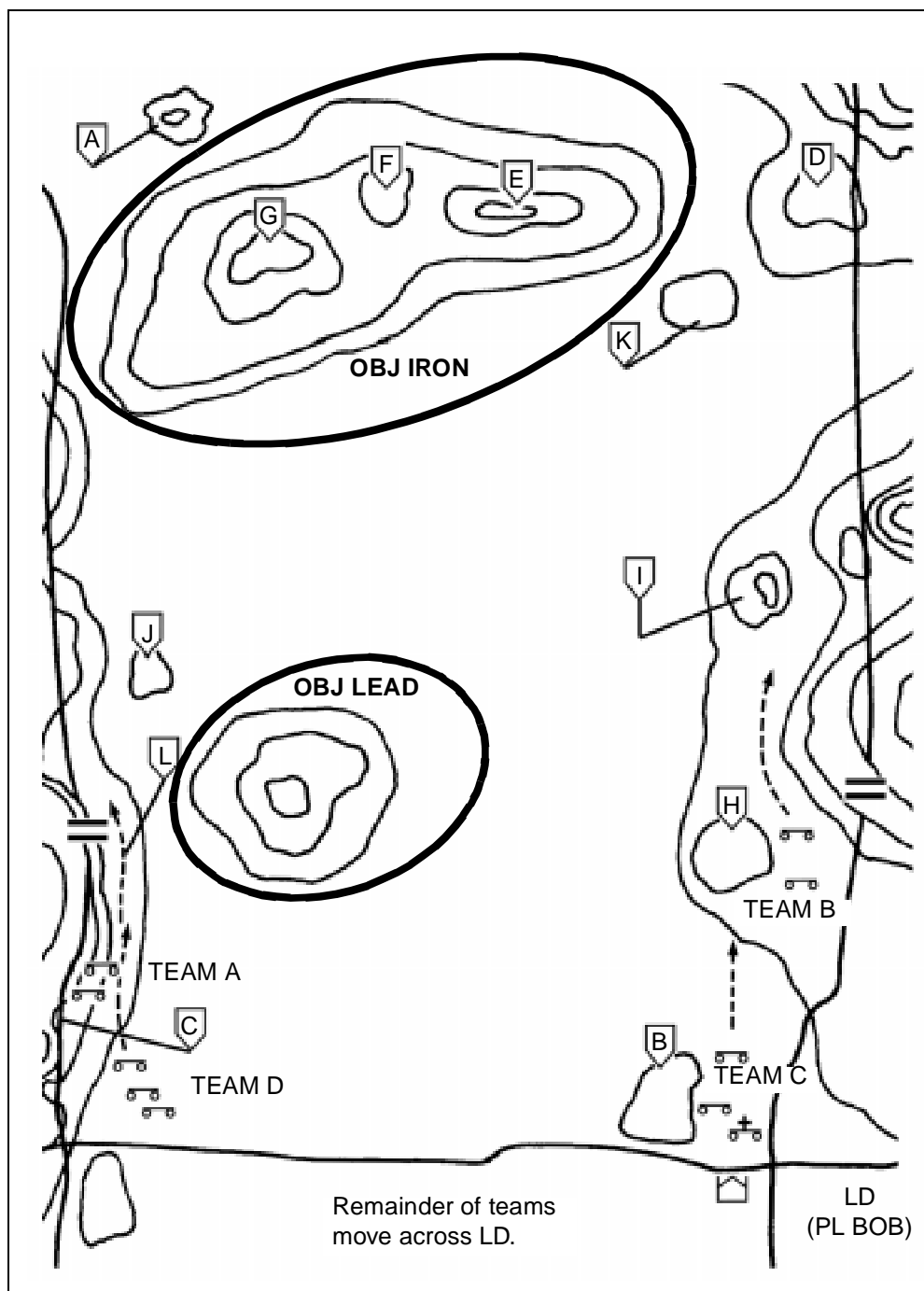**Figure 3-21. Teams A and B cross LD**

Figure 3-22. Trail teams cross LD
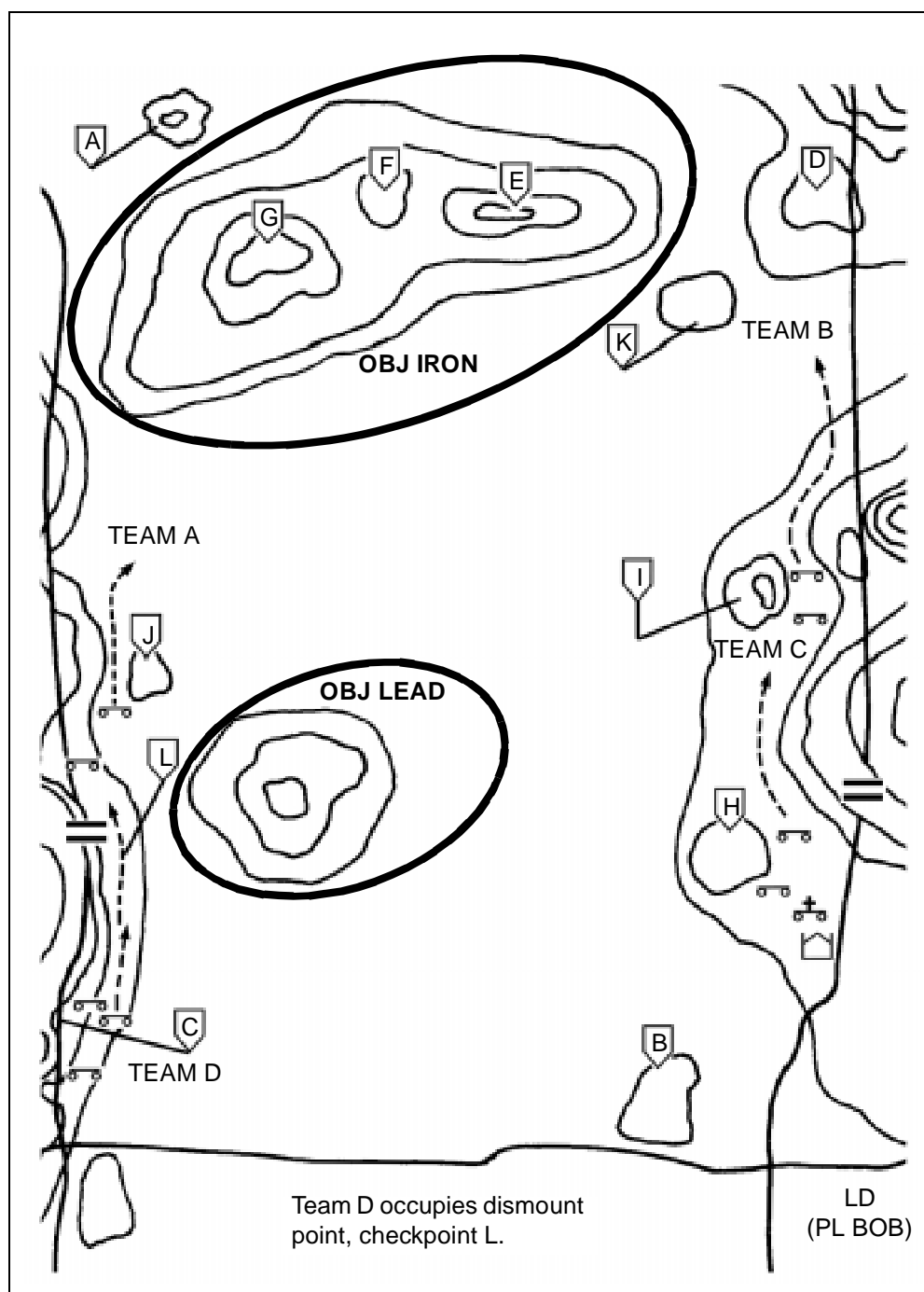
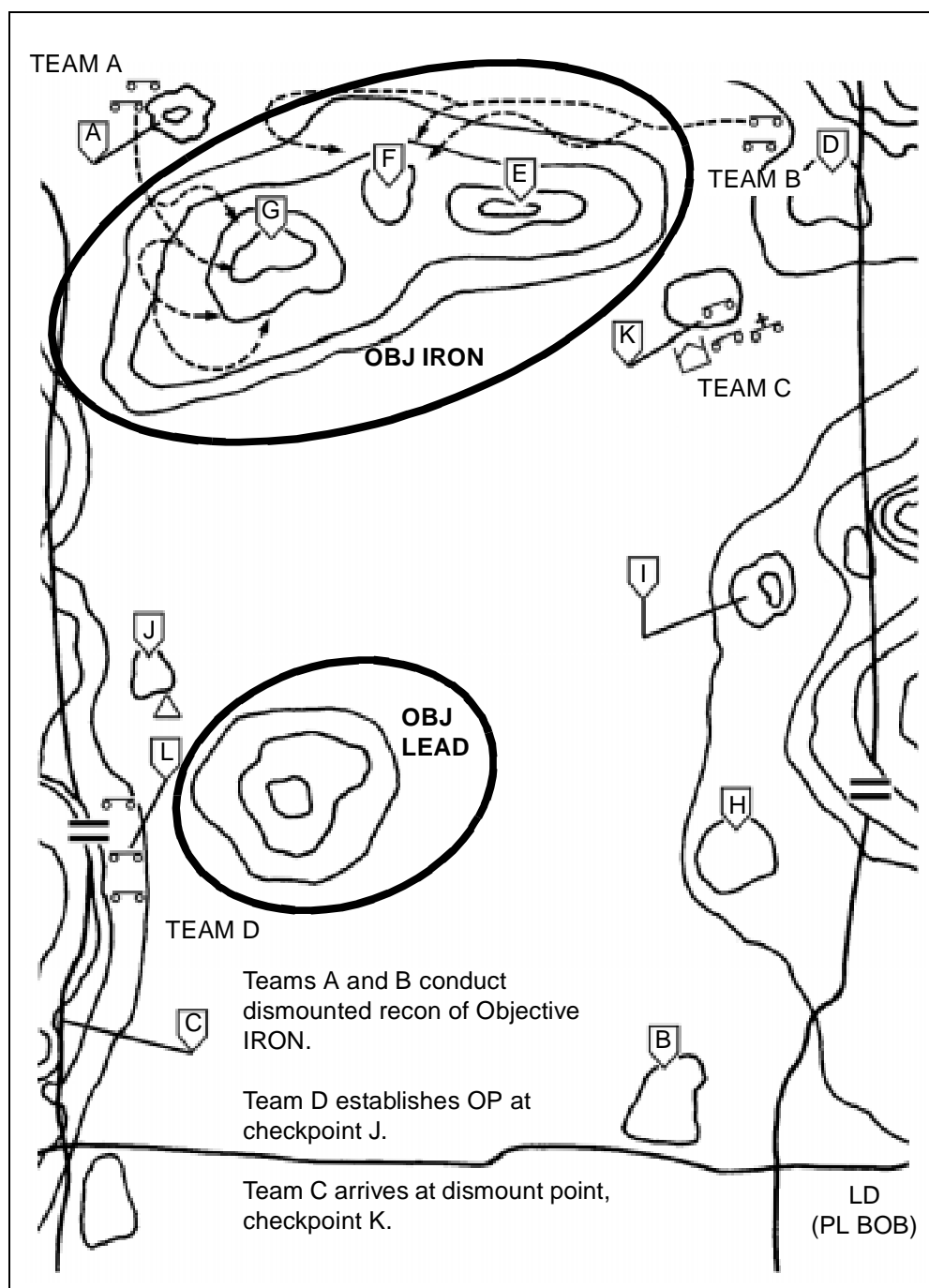**Figure 3-23. Team D deploys local security**

OBJ IRON

TEAM B

A

F

E

G

D

K

TEAM A

TEAM C

I

J

OBJ LEAD

L

H

TEAM D

C

B

Team D conducts dismounted recon of Objective LEAD.

Teams A and B arrive at dismount points, checkpoints A and D.

LD
(PL BOB)
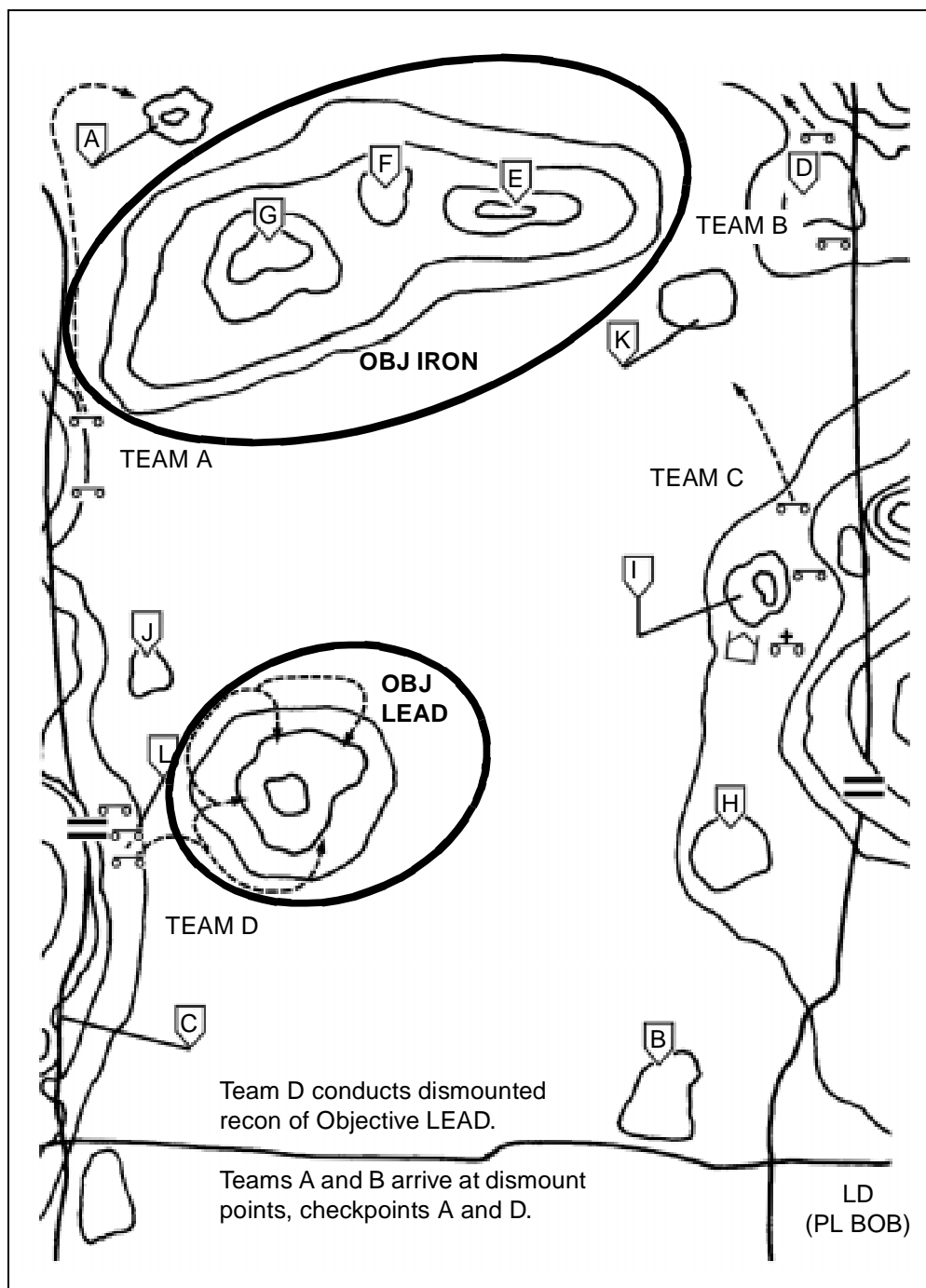
Figure 3-24. Team C continues to move

TEAM A

OBJ IRON

TEAM B

TEAM C

**OBJ
LEAD**

TEAM D

Teams A and B conduct
dismounted recon of Objective
IRON.

Team D establishes OP at
checkpoint J.

Team C arrives at dismount point,
checkpoint K.

LD
(PL BOB)

Figure 3-25. Team C occupies dismount point dismounted

Teams A and B complete their recon of Objective Iron; they establish OPs from which they can observe into the objective and monitor any changes in the enemy situation. They also submit detailed reports on enemy dispositions through the platoon leader to their commander. Team C and the engineer recon team execute a dismounted patrol of checkpoint E, its portion of Objective Iron (see Figure 3-26).
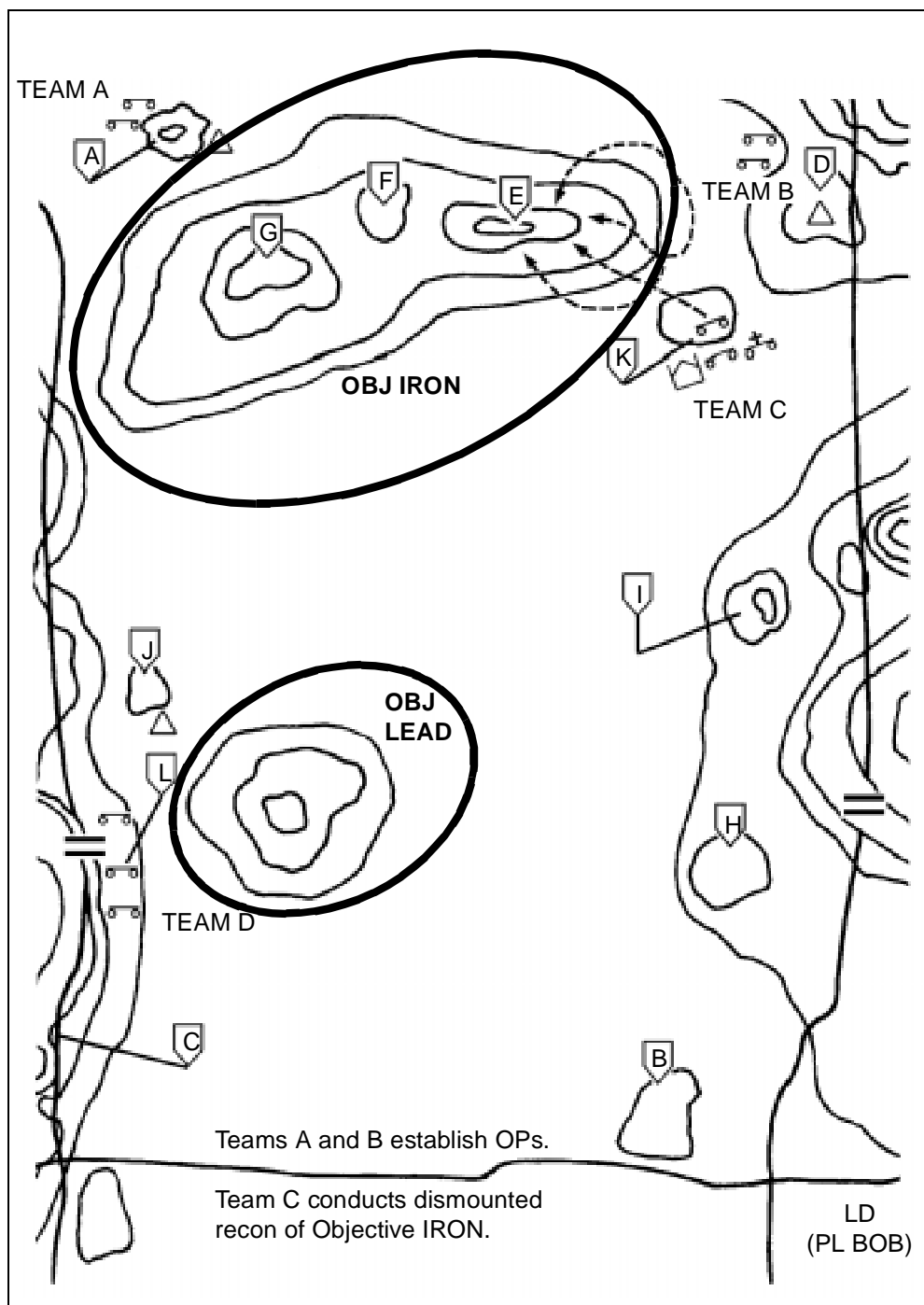

Figure 3-26. Team C and engineers execute patrol of checkpoint E

Team C and the engineer recon team complete their dismounted recon of checkpoint E. All teams observe the objective area and send updated spot reports as necessary. The platoon continues to observe the objective until relieved or assigned subsequent tasks by its higher headquarters (see Figure 3-27).
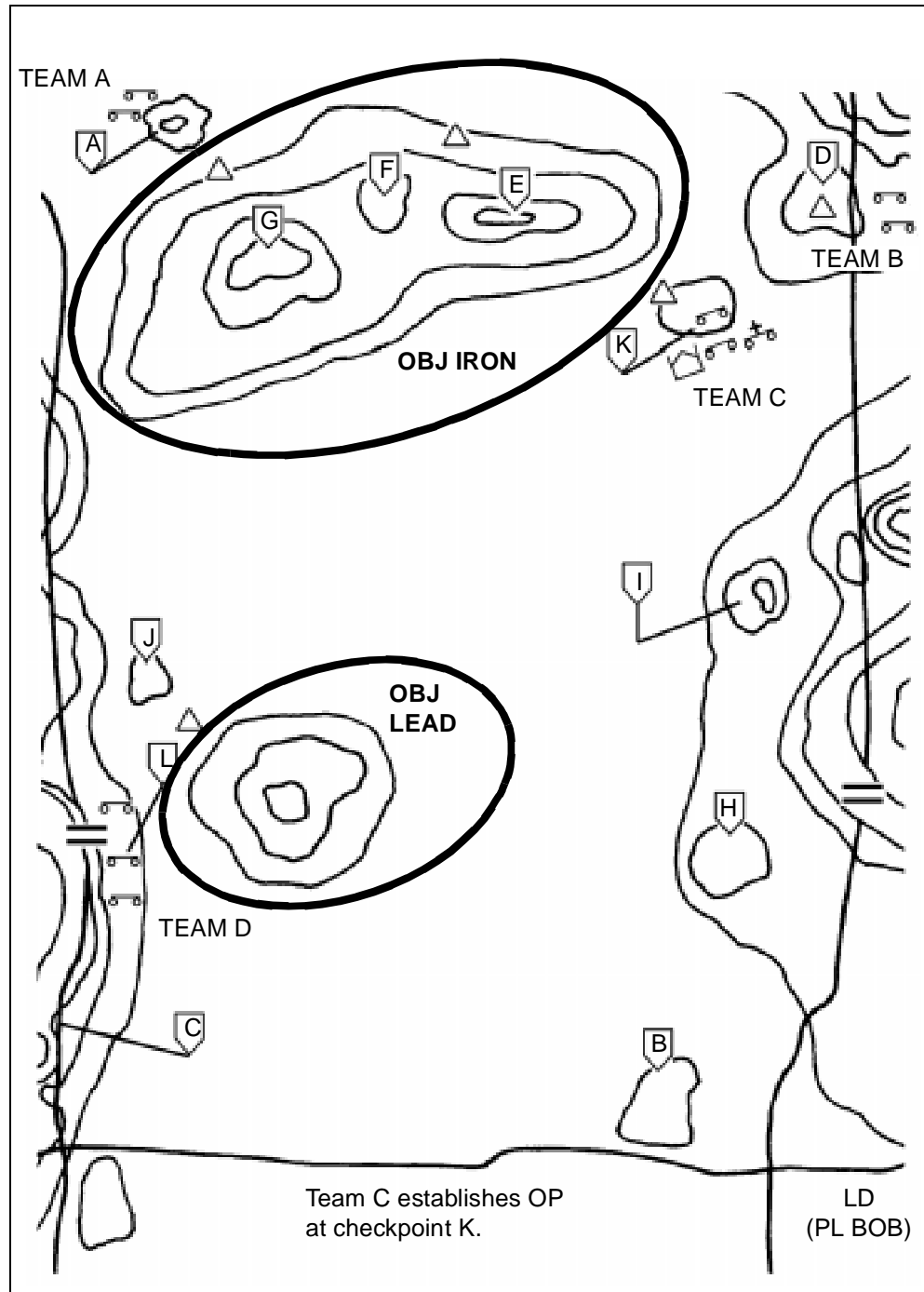

Figure 3-27. Area recon complete